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PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHMOS
DE RUEHIHL #0058 0971807
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P 071807Z APR 06
FM REO HILLAH
TO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0576
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0592
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE
RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH 0641

C O N F I D E N T I A L HILLAH 000058

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/7/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KIBL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NAJAF QUIET, BUT ANTI-CF RUMORS FLY; BABIL QUIET DESPITE
THREAT REPORT

CLASSIFIED BY: Alfred Fonteneau, Regional Coordinator, REO
Hillah, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: REO Al-Hillah media contacts reported that while Najaf city was calm and under tight police and army control, Mahdi Army members were seen massing in the cemetery area. The city is abuzz with rumors, and several contacts reported that much of the chatter blames the attacks on the Americans, either directly or by CF "negligence." Babil was quiet throughout the day, despite a report early Friday that suggested Mahdi militia elements would take over Iraqi police checkpoints and perhaps attack CF facilities in the area (including REO Al-Hillah). This evening, Babil remains quiet with no sign of militia movement. END SUMMARY

12. (C) In conjunction with disseminating our message of condolence for the April 7th car bomb attack near the sacred Iman Ali Shrine in Najaf, REO staff talked with multiple contacts in Najaf. All reported that the police and army had the city under tight control. However, an Iraqi border guard officer (protect) stated that in the late afternoon, Mahdi Army members began congregating in Najaf's cemetery. A correspondent for a Babil radio station, resident in Najaf, told REO staff that while the city remained closed to vehicular traffic, pedestrians were able to walk about. Contacts stated that there were widespread rumors suggesting US involvement or complicity in the attack. Some rumors noted that the Americans drive SUVs similar to the one used in the attack. Another rumor reported to REO Al-Hillah pointed to CF air patrols over Najaf as evidence of CF complicity. Comment: CF helicopters were in the area monitoring pro-Ja'fari demonstrations. End Comment. Two contacts reported that Najaf Deputy Governor Abdul Hussein Bakr Hassan received a hostile reception from crowds at VBIED site with onlookers blaming both Hassan and the Americans for failure to prevent the attack .

13. (C) Separately, REO Babil received a threat warning of impending attack early on Friday, April 7. Although REO Al-Hillah went to Condition Yellow for several hours, local contacts reported that the streets remained quiet after Friday prayers and there were no signs of militia elements moving within the city, occupying IP checkpoints, or staging for an attack against CF facilities, including REO Al-Hillah.

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